

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims

Claim 1 (Currently Amended) An apoptosis inducing agent which comprises ~~[[a]]~~ an isolated protein as being Vpr protein encoded by ~~vpr~~ Vpr gene of HIV-1 wherein 15 amino acid residues from the C-terminal are deleted.

Claim 2 (Currently Amended) ~~[[An]]~~ The apoptosis inducing agent ~~which comprises a~~ comprising the isolated protein [having amino acid sequence of the protein] according to claim 1 wherein one to several amino acids are substituted, inserted, and/or deleted, and having apoptosis-inducing activity.

Claim 3 (Original) The apoptosis inducing agent according to claim 2, which comprises said protein having substantially no ability of arresting a cell in G₂ phase.

Claim 4 (Currently Amended) An isolated apoptosis-inducing gene encoding the protein according to claim 1.

Claim 5 (Currently Amended - Withdrawn) A method for inducing apoptosis of a cell by ~~using~~ administering a protein as being Vpr protein encoded by ~~vpr~~ Vpr gene of HIV-1 wherein 15 amino acid residues from the C-terminal are deleted.

Claim 6 (Original) A recombinant vector containing the gene according to claim 4.

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Claim 7 (Currently Amended) A method for inducing apoptosis of a cell by ~~using~~
administering the recombinant vector according to claim 6.

Claims 8 – 11 (Canceled)

Claim 12 (Currently Amended) A method for preventive and/or therapeutic
treatment of a cancer or AIDS, which comprises ~~the step of~~ administering a
therapeutically effective amount of the protein according to claim 1.

Claim 13 (Currently Amended - Withdrawn) A method for preventive and/or
therapeutic treatment of a cancer or AIDS, which comprises ~~the step of~~ administering a
therapeutically effective amount of the recombinant vector according to claim 6.

Claim 14 (Currently Amended) An isolated apoptosis-inducing gene encoding
the protein according to claim 2.

Claim 15 (Currently Amended) An isolated apoptosis-inducing gene encoding
the protein according to claim 3.

Claims 16 – 19 (Canceled)

Claim 20 (Currently Amended - Withdrawn) A method for preventive and/or
therapeutic treatment of a cancer or AIDS, which comprises ~~the step of~~ administering a
therapeutically effective amount of the protein according to claim 2.

Claim 21 (Currently Amended - Withdrawn) A method for preventive and/or
therapeutic treatment of a cancer or AIDS, which comprises ~~the step of~~ administering a
therapeutically effective amount of the protein according to claim 3.